



U.S. Highway 66, popularly known as "Route 66" is significant as the first all-weather highway linking Chicago to Los Angeles. What sets this segment of national highway apart from its contemporaries is that it remains the shortest, year-round route between Chicago and Los Angeles by more than 200 miles, which made Route 66 popular among thousands of motorists who drove west in subsequent decades.

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The often romanticized highway represents an outstanding example of the transition from dirt road to super-highway. Not only does Route 66 underscore the importance of the automobile as a technological achievement, but, perhaps equally important to the American people, it symbolized unprecedented freedom and mobility for every citizen who could own and operate a car. In response, the federal government pledged to link small town U.S.A. with all of the metropolitan capitals.

As a component of the federal network, Route 66 linked the isolated, rural West to the densely populated urban Midwest and Northeast. Chicago had long served as a transshipment point for goods that were transported to the West. The creation of Route 66 ensured the continuation of this vital socioeconomic link. The appearance of U.S. Highway 66 came at a time of unparalleled social, economic, and political disruption and global conflict, and it enabled the most comprehensive movement of people in the history of the United

